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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NAIROBI 003300

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SUBJECT: REGIONAL ISSUES AND KENYA TRAVEL WARNING:

CONGRESSMAN PAYNE MEETS PRESIDENT KIBAKI

Classified By: POL/C MICHAEL J. FITZPATRICK, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶11. (C) SUMMARY: Congressman Donald Payne expressed appreciation to Kenya for its leadership role in the Sudan peace accord and the Somalia reconciliation process in a meeting with President Kibaki August 10. The Congressman said he was trying to encourage the State Department to take a more active role in Somalia, but the Department "has not listened." Kibaki characterized the Somalis as "difficult" to work with, spent a considerable portion of the meeting complaining about the travel advisory, and pleaded for greater representation of poor countries in the Security Council. President Kibaki was affable, alert and engaged during the entirety of the one-hour meeting. END SUMMARY.

¶12. (U) Congressman Donald Payne (D-NJ), the ranking Democrat on the House Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights, and International Operations, met with President Kibaki at State house August 10. The Congressman was accompanied by two of his staff members Ted Dagne and Noelle Lusane, and the Embassy was represented by the Political Counselor and poloff (notetaker). On the Kenyan side were President Kibaki's Advisor for Strategic Policy, Stanley Murage, and two officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Assistant Minister Moses Wetangula and Permanent Secretary Boaz Mbaya.

REGIONAL AFFAIRS

¶13. (C) A principal topic in the meeting was regional affairs. The Congressman, who was on the last leg of a trip to Eritrea, Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Sudan (the latter as a member of the official U.S. delegation to the funeral of John Garang), expressed his appreciation to President Kibaki for Kenya's leadership role in bringing peace to Sudan and in facilitating the Somali reconciliation process. He said he had been encouraging the State Department to take a more active role in Somalia, but the Department "has not listened." He hoped that Secretary Rice would get the U.S. government more involved in the Horn of Africa and said that his subcommittee might summon the Secretary to explain U.S. Government Somalia policy.

¶14. (C) Kibaki offered that the Somalis were "difficult," even more so now that the transitional federal institutions had moved from Kenya to Somalia. Despite one ethnicity, one language and one religion, the clans just liked to fight, with the warlords having a vested interest in protecting their fiefdoms.

¶15. (C) On the East Africa Community, Kibaki said relations with Uganda and Tanzania were good. He looked forward to the three countries becoming one state sometime next year (sic).

TRAVEL ADVISORY

¶16. (C) The Congressman also expressed his appreciation for the many years of good relations between Kenya and the U.S., despite problems like the travel advisory. This prompted Kibaki to wonder why the U.S. persists with the travel warning. The advisory, he said, affects not only American tourism, but also the willingness of tourists from other countries to come to Kenya. It affects foreign investment as well. Why is Kenya more dangerous than the U.K. or Spain, which do not have travel advisories? Only the Somalis cause us problems. Americans who live in Kenya know it is safe. He said he did not want to protest officially or make the issue any bigger than it is, but wondered aloud if there was some hidden agenda, something the U.S. Government was not telling Kenya?

UN REFORM

¶17. (C) President Kibaki confirmed that he would be leading the Kenyan delegation to New York for the opening of UNGA in September. He said Kenya wants a permanent seat on the Security Council. The world had changed since 1945 with many more countries now in the UN. These countries need to have a voice, but the U.S. just wants to keep Security Council

permanent membership at five.

OTHER TOPICS

18. (C) The Congressman touched on several other issues to which the President responded. Kibaki explained that, as a result of his policy of providing free elementary education, primary school attendance had increased from 4.5 million in early 2003 to 7.25 million at present. The biggest problem was building more schools to accommodate this increase. On the economy, the flower industry was booming and AGOA had helped Kenya compete with countries like China in textile exports.

COMMENT

19. (C) The travel advisory continues to be a sore point in bilateral relations. Kibaki and his advisors spent nearly half the meeting complaining about it and it is almost always raised in Emboff meetings with other Government officials. The fact that the travel advisory no longer affects tourism -- it is virtually impossible now to find a hotel room in the most popular Kenyan tourist sites -- is almost beside the point. The Government believes that the U.S. is singling out Kenya unfairly, thus injuring Kenyan pride.

10. (C) President Kibaki was affable, alert and engaged during the meeting. This and other recent meetings Post has had with the President have convinced us that Kibaki has fully recovered from the health issues that impaired his performance in the first year or so of his term in office.

END COMMENT.

11. Khartoum minimize considered.

BELLAMY